

**T**he Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation Project is part of the Delaware Department of Justice, Fraud and Consumer Protection Division. The Project focuses on protecting Delaware's older citizens, living in our communities, from abuse and neglect as well as fraud and exploitation, through public education, investigation of prosecution.

If you live in the community and believe that you are a victim of financial exploitation or you suspect that someone you know is a victim, contact one of the following agencies immediately:

- Delaware Department of Justice  
Elder Abuse and Exploitation Project  
**New Castle County:**  
(302) 577-8508  
**Kent & Sussex Counties:**  
(302) 739-4211 ext. 237
- Division of Aging and Adults  
with Physical Disabilities  
**New Castle County:**  
(302) 453-3820  
**Kent & Sussex Counties:**  
(302) 422-1386
- Local Police Agency

If the suspected victim lives in a nursing home or long-term care facility, contact:

- Division of Long-term Care  
Statewide: (877) 453-0012
- Attorney General's Medicaid  
Fraud Unit: (302) 577-8505



**ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**Joseph R. "Beau" Biden III**

### **Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation Project**

**New Castle County:**  
820 N. French St.  
5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
Phone: (302) 577-8508

**Kent and Sussex Counties:**  
102 W. Water Street,  
Dover, DE 19904  
Phone: (302) 739-4211

Or visit the Attorney General's website:  
<http://www.state.de.us/attgen/>

**Volunteers are needed to assist senior  
victims! Please contact us to learn more  
about the Attorney General's Senior  
Victim Advocate Program.**

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# **FINANCIAL ABUSE OF THE ELDERLY**

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**Safeguarding Your Finances**



**STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**Fraud and Consumer  
Protection Division**

## Warning Signs of Financial Abuse

### 1. Unusual activity in bank accounts

Be wary of unusually large withdrawals, more frequent than usual withdrawals or drastic changes in types of withdrawals. Other inappropriate activity in bank accounts, such as automatic teller machine withdrawals when the older person is not able to get to the bank, can be a sign of financial abuse.

### 2. Changes in financial accounts

Changes in bank or investment accounts at a time when the older person is not capable of understanding the nature or extent of the changes may be an indication of trouble. Such changes include the establishment of joint tenancy on a bank or investment account, or the execution of a "Power of Attorney."

### 3. Older person not properly provided for

If a caregiver or relative is receiving and/or managing funds on behalf of the older person, yet the older person does not appear to be properly cared for, financial abuse may be occurring.

### 4. Changes to a will or property title

A new will or substantial changes to a will, or changes to a property title, at a time when the older person is not capable of understanding the nature and effect of such changes, may indicate exploitation.

### 5. Valuable items are missing

The disappearance, without reasonable explanation, of jewelry, silverware, artwork or collectibles is a sign that someone may be misappropriating an older person's valuables.

### 6. Receiving credit card bills for an account for which an older person never applied

This could be a sign of identity theft. Someone could be using an older person's personal information to improperly secure credit for themselves. Contact the credit card issuer to report this information as well as the three credit bureaus:

**Equifax: 800-525-6285**

**Experian: 888-397-3742**

**Transunion: 800-680-7289**

## Safety Tips for Using an ATM or Debit Card

- Never give anyone your personal identification number (PIN)
- Do not use an easily detectable PIN such as a birth date or social security number
- Immediately notify your financial institution if you lose or misplace your ATM or debit card
- Use care if you are using an ATM at night. Be aware of the people around you and always put your money away before leaving the ATM area. If the location is not well lit, notify the bank.

## Good Financial Practices

**DO** use your common sense. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

**DO NOT** give out personal information (social security number, credit card number) to someone who calls you or sends you an unsolicited email. You make the call or log in to a website if you want to make a purchase!

**DO NOT** respond to emails or letters from a financial institution that you have an account with if it addresses you as "dear customer." Your bank or credit card company knows your name!

**DO** use Direct Deposit for your checks.

**DO** sign your own checks. Never sign a blank check!

**DO** get a trusted third person to review your statements if your finances are managed by an investment advisor. Make sure the financial advisor is licensed!

**DO NOT** sign a document without first carefully reading it in its entirety.

**DO NOT** allow anyone, even a relative, to put their name on your accounts without your express consent.

**DO NOT** assign money or property to anyone in return for care, even a family member, without having the agreement reviewed by an attorney.